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IMPORTANT NOTICE

SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE LATIN CLUB—DEC 2, 1905

Professor Benjamin L D'Ooge of Michigan State Normal College will address the club on the subject, "Essentials and Non-Essentials" at the Hotel Marlborough, Thirty-fifth street and Broadway, New York City. Be sure to notify "THE LATIN LEAFLET", 1050 Bergen street, Brooklyn, by postal card, if you intend to be present. ATTEND TO THIS MATTER NOW.

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ELISION IN LATIN AND GREEK In Four Parts—Part I

BY H W MAGOUN

Elision in Latin has long been a *crux*. Concerning it, two well-known theories have been in vogue. According to one, certain syllables were suppressed in reading Latin poetry. According to the other, they were "half-pronounced", or "slurred", so as to unite with the following syllables and take no appreciable time. Each of these attempted solutions of this vexed question shows the earmarks of a mechanical theory, invented to get rid of a difficulty; and no one claims that the result is satisfactory, whichever horn of the dilemma is taken. There is, in fact, little in either theory to commend it to an intelligent scholar, since each is patently an attempt to meet a peculiarity of Latin verse in an artificial way. The inadequacy of each has already been shown in these pages, Vol V No 125 (May 8, 1905), and so thoroughly has the work been done that no further word is needed.

That there is an elision question in Latin, is clearly evident. It will be a surprise to many, however, to learn that there is also an elision question in Greek. In this language, the nature of elision has been regarded for many years as settled; and yet a merely casual examination reveals certain curious anomalies and some apparent, if not real, contradictions. Elision in Greek is regularly defined as the "dropping"

of a final short vowel before a word beginning with a vowel, while Apocope is defined as the "cutting off" of a similar vowel before a word beginning with a consonant.

If each is merely the omission of a final short vowel, why should there be any difference in the method of indicating the loss? Does the simple fact that the latter is confined to poetry have any real bearing on the case? Does the nature of the sound employed at the beginning of the following word furnish, in itself, any grounds for using an apostrophe in the one case, but not in the other? Would not the fact that the vowel has been dropped, be quite as plain without the apostrophe before a consonant? In reality, would it not be plainer? If there is any reason why an apostrophe should be used to mark the omission of a vowel in elision, but not in apocope, what is it?

Again, why does apocope cause a recessive accent in dissyllabic oxytone prepositions which suffer the loss of a final vowel, while elision produces no such change? Why, for example, should apocope give *κάρ*, but elision *κατ*? What is the latter in accent? Does it take on a proclitic nature, or—what amounts to the same thing—is it accentless? And if it becomes, in effect, proclitic, what is to be done with elided enclitics? Does the *γέ* of Homer, *Od IX 288*, *ἀλλ' ὃ γ' ἀναΐξας*, throw its accent back, but its *γ*-forward? In other words, is its accent enclitic, but its *γ*-proclitic, in character? And what of the *ποτ' 'απ'* of Hom *Il VIII 108*, *οὐς ποτ' 'απ' Αἰνείαν*? How, furthermore, is the second *λ* of *ἀλλ'*, in the preceding example, to be attached to the rough breathing of the following *δ*? It is clear that both *λ*'s should be sounded, and it has been customary to unite the consonant preceding an elided vowel with the following word in pronunciation. Are the four words, then, in each instance, to be taken as if they formed a single word? Were they pronounced respectively as *al-lhó-ga-na-i-xas* and *hoú-spo-ta-pai-neí-an*? And, if the difficulty of the *-lh-* is met in this way, what shall be done with two aspirations when they are brought together by a case of elision? For example, in *οὐθ' ἐράπων*, Hom *Od IX 278*, have we *oúhhetárōn*, *oúthhetárōn*, or *oúth' hetárōn*, with a break between the two?

What shall be done with *νηὼν θ' ἄμα*, *Od* X 123, or with *ἀνά θ' ἰστία*, *Il* I 480? Does the accent of the enclitic word go back, but the τ-(θ) forward, to be slurred onto the following word? Is the initial rough breathing lost, in each case, in the process? And, if it is not excluded by slurring, how is it sounded? Does "the horse", as pronounced in colloquial English, throw any light on the question? Again, what shall be done with such a series as *Οἱ δ' εἰς ὄρχηστὺν τε*, *Od* I 421? Have we here but a single accent, with an enclitic word and, in effect, three proclitic ones, pronounced as if there were but two? Is the whole combination, in this instance, to be pronounced as a single word?

Does the *δέ* lose both its accent and its syllabic identity? If the -ε is completely gone, of what possible use is the apostrophe? It should stand for something. The final vowel is clearly gone in apocope; but there no apostrophe is used. Why not? Is it not needed, if the two are alike? Are they, as a matter of fact, alike, or is there a difference? And if there is really a difference, what is it? Does the mere statement that the variation in the form of the writing arose from a desire to show the different ways in which the loss originated explain the fact?

But, again, why should dissyllabic words which suffer elision remain either accentless or oxytone, although similar words under the influence of apocope become grave in accent, even if originally paroxytone? Homer has *ἴν'* and *οὔτ'* and other similar forms (*Od* IX 136-137, etc, etc); but he has also *καὶ δ'* (*Ibid* 482 etc), not to mention other cases of apocope. If the vowel sound is dropped in elision at the end of the words *ἴνα* and *οὔτε*, why are they not written *ἴν* and *οὔτ*? Will "custom", or "exception", explain the peculiarity? Is it possible that the words "Apocope" and "Elision" may in some way suggest an explanation of the difference which is used in the method of writing in the two cases? Do these words merely name alternate forms of the same phenomenon, or do they imply that there is a difference, in the two things themselves, which is real and palpable? What do those acute accents mean? Cf the *φήμ' ἐγώ*, *ἐπ' ἦσαν*, etc, of the grammars, and such expressions as *Il* I 107, *τὰ κάκ' ἐστὶ*, and *Ibid* 174, *πάρ' ἐμοί γε*, (Rzach). Cf also the forms of *ἄρα* (*ῥά*) as in *Il* II 761, *τίς τ' ἄρ τῶν*, VII 182, *ὅν ἄρ' ἠθέλον*, I 113, *καὶ γάρ ῥα Κλυταιμνήστρης*, and IV 501, *τόν ῥ' Ὀδυσσεύς*. Do words involving elision become, so to speak, a part of the following

words, so that they evade the law of the final grave?

If this mode of escape is taken, of what use are the initial breathings on the words which follow? And how can a pause, such as often occurs in elision in Homer, be observed? See below. Moreover, what shall be done with such cases as *μηρι' ἔκηρ*, (*Hom Il* I 40; *Od* IV 764; IX 553; etc, etc) and *ἀγλά' ἄποινα* (*Il* I 111)? With the last example, cf *Ibid* 23 and 377, *ἀγλαὰ δέχθαι ἄποινα*, and note the recessive acute accent in elision. Do the two adjacent acute accents, which are used in the two instances cited, harmonize with the law of dissyllabic enclitics, on the basis of such a combination? Many similar examples occur, as a few citations will indicate: *μεγάλ' ἄαχε*, *Il* I 482; *τάδ' ἔσσεται*, I 573; *ἄρ' ἔφη*, I 584, etc; *στόμ' ἔχων*, II 250; *ἄρ' ἔξετο*, II 268; *μέγ' ἄριστον*, II 274, etc; not to mention others. It is true that two, or even three, adjacent acute accents sometimes occur, where there is no pause and no elision, as in *Il* I 28, *μή νύ τοι 416*, *ἐπεὶ νύ τοι*, 542, *οἷδέ τί πώ μοι*, and II 238, *ἦ ῥά τί οἱ*. Such cases, however, involve no combination of the syllables bearing the accents. The words are either wholly or partially monosyllabic, and they can always be clearly separated. It cannot be so in cases of elision, if slurring is allowed. Cf *Il* II 572, *δθ' ἄρ' Ἀδρηστος*. Are these three words pronounced as one, with three adjacent acute accents? Is such a supposition reasonable? Can it be avoided, if slurring is permitted?

But,—to return to the preceding examples— if the final vowels in these instances are elided to avoid hiatus, as they are regularly supposed to be where elision occurs; can it be called a success in the first two cases? Will the two adjacent short vowels, with their acute accents, lend themselves to the avoidance of hiatus with any degree of readiness? Even if we assume that a parasitic consonantal sound is developed before the initial vowel, as, for example, a y-sound in the first case; will not one of the accents at once tend to become obscure, provided this process of avoiding hiatus succeeds? Will the hiatus be relieved, in other words, by dropping the final vowel, in case both accents are kept? And what sound can be developed between the two *a*'s of the second example, or what object can there be in dropping an *a* between two others? Does such a process avoid hiatus? Is the statement that these are exceptions satisfactory? Does it explain what it pretends to explain? Does it, in fact, do anything more than beg the question?